

Stephen Vincent

from Tenderly

10.

We refuse to stop using words, this occasion, that one, too:
So much eludes the unspoken, the letters on the page
A solidity before no god, but the space an horizon:
Letter, stud, façade, shingle, pitched roof
The place to fucking slow down, look down, worship
The light – the sun cutting through the blond waves
In her hair: the worship unto once a dream
Here – step by step – ships, these bodies Helen crossed
What we brush, this afternoon, this, is it, a brief slice
Not some pizza, the light back through her hair
Some say, can we say, *affirmative, persuasive*
O so brief, as must be, or so said, the Holy – hear the water
Splash against the ship - Holy, *catch it in this moment only*
Holy, *patiently, patiently*, (why is it so hard to say?)

14.

It did not happen that way, the choice
Was not perfect: time split the difference
The red two-by-four slipped through the crack
Keep the secret, he said, keep it tight
Don't breathe a word, spend your ten, twenty
Make it forty years, waiting. Imagine sand
Sand frozen in a glass, transparent, permanent
Immobile. You will, or will not, take the last shot:
Darkness is a Calla Lilly, illumined, priceless
The purpose of literature is to illuminate
Then fracture: the long lost mosaic huddled
Now, a skeletal structure, looming. Rise, she said
Strike, spring up, stop at nothing, betray everything
Speak the truth once, twice, in multiples
Be a girl in a wide red dress, thin gold braces
An on-fire, spiral-mountain, burning, magenta hair:
In the green garden, touch the steel girder
Angled against the thick, high stonewall.